



Minutes for GTTG meeting

Date: 19 November 2015

Location: FCS Grampian Conservancy, Huntly

Present:

Will Anderson (Chair)

Ian Cameron – Moray Council (IC)

Neil Crookston – Scottish Woodlands (NC)

Ian Cowe – Forestry Commission Scotland (ICo)

Cameron Gillies – Euroforest (CaG)

Frank Tomlinson – Tilhill Forestry (FT)

Claire Glaister – GTTG Project Officer (CG)

Lee Grigor – James Jones & Sons Ltd (LG)

Andrew Nicol – RTS Ltd. (AN)

Ralph Singleton – Aberdeenshire Council (RSi)

Roland Stiven – Timber Transport Forum (RSt)

Alasdair Young – Forestry Commission Scotland (AY)

Apologies:

Donald Beaton – James Jones & Sons Ltd

Neil Dyson – Treelands

Iain Mackenzie – James Jones & Sons Ltd

Derek Murray – Aberdeenshire Council

Derek Nelson – Forestry Commission Scotland

Jonathan Ritchie – James Jones & Sons Ltd

Agenda Item	Action	Appointed person/s
3. (28/08/14)	Make contact with “missing information” agents on SCOTS project	CG
4. (20/11/14)	Liaise with FCS to review Forest Plans to fill gaps in SCOTS project data	CG
4. (20/11/14)	Submit timber forecasting information to CG	NC
7. (20/11/14)	Circulate Timber Transport Management Protocols to GTTG members and wider agent network	CG
7. (20/11/14)	Submit comments on driver shortages to the Road Haulage Association	Industry/CC
7. (20/11/14)	Circulate Scottish Water guidance on forestry operations to GTTG members for comment	CG/All
3. (23/03/15)	Enhance links between ARM and TTF websites	RS
4. (23/03/15)	Members to continue to put forward STTS proposals using pre-proposal form	All
3. (16/07/15)	Provide NFI data to Jacobs	CG
3. (16/07/15)	Use the Timber Transport Mapping tool to highlight how much timber has been forecast to use the A96 and advise Jacobs accordingly	CG
3. (16/07/15)	Identify exit points within a set corridor of current route options and encourage land owners to make contact with Transport Scotland	CG
5. (16/07/15)	Update ARM website to show relevant B roads as Agreed Routes	CG
3.	Provide shape files for SCOTS exit points and ARMs to aid LA review of ARMs	CG/LAs
3.	Summarise previous discussions on C13E and circulate to members for review	CG
3.	Add CG’s name to circulation list for road notifications in Aberdeenshire	RSi/DM
4.	Submit STTS funding requirements for B976/B9158 project	RSi
4.	Highlight potential STTS projects to CG	All
5.	Contact individual partners to seek funding commitment	ICo
5.	Confirm value and timing of payment for ARM hosting contribution	RSt
6.	Request copy of Think Safe, Be Safe guide from FISA and circulate to GTTG members a.s.a.p.	CG
6.	If provided, submit comments on the FISA guide as soon as possible	All
6.	Update FISA-type guide to managing timber transport and circulate for final comment	CG
6..	Submit final comment on FISA-type guide to managing timber transport	All
7.	Confirm minimum tonnage thresholds for consultation on felling licences at meeting with FCS	IC/DM

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

WA welcomed all those present and invited members to provide a brief introduction. CG confirmed that a number of apologies had been received and that these would be added to the minutes.

2. Notes of last meeting on 16 July 2015 & matters arising

Minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as correct. Action table below has been amended to reflect current status (those now completed have been shaded); carried forward actions added to current action table.

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7. (20/11/14)	Circulate Scottish Water guidance on forestry operations to GTTG members for comment	CG/All
3. (23/03/15)	CG to clarify timber thresholds and prepare FISA-type checklist for comment	CG
3. (23/03/15)	Members to comment on/approve checklist for timber haulage/consultation	All
3. (23/03/15)	Enhance links between ARM and TTF websites	RSt
4. (23/03/15)	Members to continue to put forward STTS proposals using pre-proposal form	All
3. (16/07/15)	Provide NFI data to Jacobs	CG
3. (16/07/15)	Use the Timber Transport Mapping tool to highlight how much timber has been forecast to use the A96 and advise Jacobs accordingly	CG
3. (16/07/15)	Identify exit points within a set corridor of current route options and encourage land owners to make contact with Transport Scotland	CG
4. (16/07/15)	Arrange meetings with Local Authority representatives and provide Timber Transport Mapping tool software and User Guide	CG/IC/DM
5. (16/07/15)	Update ARM website to show relevant B roads as Agreed Routes	CG
5. (16/07/15)	Consider options for utilising Timber Transport Mapping tool in ARM update	All

3. Agreed Routes Map

3.1 Review of classifications

CG reminded members that the SCOTS exit point data and ARM information has been used to generate a map which shows roads on which timber has been forecast to travel but which don't carry any specific ARM classifications. IC and RS confirmed that they are still to review these and make recommendations but CG advised that as and when changes need to be made, these can be updated on the ARM website on a rolling programme.

WA confirmed that the GTTG had agreed at the last meeting to continue with its previous approach towards B roads (i.e. that they will be considered Agreed Routes unless carrying another ARM classification) as this system has worked well over the years. ARM website to be updated to reflect this and as and when any problematic B roads are identified by the LAs, these will be brought back to the group for review/approval.

To aid this review, CG suggested that she supply the ARM and SCOTS data shape files to the Local Authorities. RSi advised that they may not be able to use these on their IT systems but would ask the question.

WA agreed that a discussion on forest access points would be carried forward to the next meeting.

IC queried why the lower section of the C13E had been classified as an Agreed Route as it hadn't been strengthened. Members discussed how the Agreed Route status had been applied on routes that were considered strategic for the forest industry but recalled that this specific route had been considered previously and the option of developing a Timber Traffic Management Plan which would take account of local vs cut-through timber traffic raised.

WA asked CG to review previous notes of these discussions and circulate for information and confirmed that should the situation have changed since this time, the group would welcome further discussion and action.

3.2 Notification of road works/closures

IC and CG confirmed that a system of notifying GTTG members of road closures in Moray is up and running and working well; IC just forwards rural road closures to CG for circulation to the group. LG stated that the information provided was useful.

RSi advised that Aberdeenshire Council could add CG's contacts to their circulation list but that the information sent out is not filtered – i.e. CG would receive all road notifications (closures, temporary restrictions etc.) and from each of the 6 wards.

Members agreed that it would be beneficial to try this system to see how it works at a practical level and review, if required.



4. Strategic Timber Transport Fund

4.1 2015/16 project proposals

RSt updated members on the status of the remaining fund and explained that whilst there had been a small underspend for this financial year, this is now forecast to be reallocated to projects which can complete all specified works by mid-February.

He confirmed that they were holding some of the underspend aside pending discussions with Aberdeenshire Council regarding the overspend on the current STTS project and potential additional works that could be completed within the funding window.

4.2 Funding post 31 March 2016

RSt advised that no decision has yet been made on the future of the STTS and is unlikely to be made before Jan/Feb next year. He also advised that should the fund continue, it is likely to run for just one year in the first instance, which could mean that larger scale/complex projects could be disadvantaged as they would be unlikely to be deliverable within that timescale.

CG suggested that if GTTG members had any ideas for projects, they should discuss these with her now so that if and when a new funding round is announced, projects could be ready for submission.

IC asked if there would be any change in the criteria of the Fund. RSt confirmed that the criteria would remain the same.

ICo asked if the sort of projects the GTTG have previously supported would still be eligible for funding. RSt confirmed that they would be and indeed that other RTTGs are now considering similar projects.

RSi asked if a badger infested road may be eligible for support. Members discussed regional examples of where badgers had undermined the public road network and agreed that it would be beneficial if these could be considered for STTS project applications. WA suggested that funding from SNH should also be considered and that the timings of any operations would need to comply with relevant legislation. IC confirmed that Moray Council wouldn't be in a position to consider a bid to the STTS at present but would review again in future, should the fund be available at that point.

5. Regional Timber Transport Project Officer role

5.1 Funding and contractual options post 31 March 2016

ICo circulated and discussed updated **Summary of Current Position** paper (see attached) which set out the financial situation for remainder of contract term (i.e. to 31 March 2016). ICo confirmed that, given the break for the Christmas period, the average 2.5 days/week time input can be maintained ***without the need for partners to provide any additional funding*** which was a change in the position as of July 2015 and due to less hours being worked in August 2015.

ICo then set out the options post April 2016 and posed a series of questions: -

1. Do members consider the RTTPO role to be beneficial?

Members confirmed they did and that they wished to see the role continued.

2. Are members able to provide match funding?

ICo advised that the level of funding required would be dependent on the continuation, or not, of STTS funding and should no STTS funding be available, an uplift of 65% on current contributions would be required to maintain the same level of service provision. Alternatively, a lower level of service could be considered.

AN asked whether members committing to a 65% uplift now might jeopardise eligibility for STTS funding. RS suggested it could do but ICo advised that at this stage, he was looking for a willingness to commit future support only.

NC asked that if there was no STTS funding for projects, would the same level of support be required anyway.

ICo suggested the required level of support may reduce but that for the role to be viable (particularly as it covers both the GTTG and S&TTTG), he would recommend not reducing input to less than 2 days/week.

WA asked if other sources of funding (e.g. LEADER) might be worth considering. ICo advised that he had attended the launch of the LEADER programme earlier in the week and had made initial enquiries. Whilst LEADER had indicated that they would be willing to consider an application, they were concerned that such a project would not be able to meet the more output-based requirements of LEADER funding.

CaG asked how the level of contribution was calculated. ICo confirmed that there was no set formula but rather a negotiation with individual organisations based, loosely, on the size of the business.

3. Are members happy for ICo to looking into funding options?

GTTG members agreed that they would prefer if the role could continue at the current 2.5 days/week level and would therefore like ICo to investigate funding options but should plan for a possible reduction to 2 days/week and hope that they would not reach a situation where the role would have to be curtailed.

Members confirmed that they would be happy for ICo to write out to members individually to see what level of funding they could provide, ideally over a 3 year commitment. ICo advised that letters would be sent to the GTTG representative in the first instance so that they could then action accordingly. In the meantime, ICo asked if members could make those with budget holding responsibility aware of this forthcoming request for funding. ICo also suggested that if members wished to speak to him directly to discuss in more detail, he would be more than happy to be contacted.

RSt advised members that all Regional Timber Transport Groups would be asked to contribute the same level of annual funding for maintenance of the ARM website but that the website hosts had requested an upfront payment covering 2 years. RSt to confirm the value of the contribution and timing of payment to ICo so that this can be taken into account as part of the funding discussions.

6. Training and Good Practice

6.1 Timber Haulier training (FISA and ILG)

CG provided a short update on early discussions being held regarding the development of training for timber hauliers (by the [Forest and Timber Technologies Industry Leadership Skills Working Group](#) and [FISA Working Group 6](#)). CG also reminded members that a timber haulier training programme had been developed through a STTS-funded project back in 2010 in order to help meet with the requirements of [Driver CPC](#) legislation and provide the option of offering this as an approved CPC training course. The training handbook and associated presentations can be found [HERE](#) and CG recommended that people try out some of the questionnaires contained therein.

CG is a member of the ILG Skills Working Group and both she and RSt are to attend the next meeting of FISA Working Group 6 at which the development of a training programme for timber hauliers is to be discussed further. Further updates will be provided to the S&TTTG in due course.

6.2 FISA-type guide for managing timber transport

Prior to a considering the previously circulated FISA-type guide for managing timber transport, members discussed the FISA Think Safe, Stay Safe, Haulier Guide.

RSt confirmed that a small number of the guides had been issued to hauliers at Truckfest for consultation but that the document was being finalised by the FISA Steering Group, prior to formal publication and launch.

Members discussed the practicalities of some of the statements contained within the document (e.g. maps for every site, hauliers attending pre-commencement meetings etc.), how the guide could place an unrealistic expectation on industry at present and not just be seen as good practice and that FISA's aim is to encourage a step change in the industry's approach to health and safety and they recognised that training will be required to enable industry to reach these the level promoted in the guide.

Members were keen to see a fully inclusive approach taken with consultation on this, and other FISA-led publications and agreed that they would be happy to provide feedback to FISA.

As RSt and CG are attending a FISA Working Group 6 meeting next Friday, the subject of which is training for timber hauliers, it was agreed that CG would request a copy of the guide from FISA tomorrow so that she can then circulate this to GTTG members for their feedback before the meeting.

In terms of the FISA-type guide for management timber transport, a number of suggestions were made (AY – streamlining of section describing Forest Plans; NC – highlighting that scoping can take form of meetings **and** other means; FT – some rewording so that sections covering landowners/agents acting on behalf of landowners come across more robustly; AN – highlighting that good practice dictates these actions).

CG to update the current version with these suggestions and circulate to members with a timescale in which to submit any final comments.

6.3 Roadside Stacking & Loading

As previously reported, RSt has been asked to produce a guidance note on Roadside Stacking and Loading by the TTF as there have been an increasing number of cases, particularly in South Scotland. Members discussed what was feasible where roadside loading/stacking areas was considered the only economical option in terms of the harvesting operation and RSt and CG highlighted that in such circumstances, Local Authorities **may** allow roadside stacking and loading but that this must be discussed and agreed with the LA before work starts (as stated in the FISA-type guide to managing timber transport). CaG confirmed that this had been the case on a job in Moray where permission to stack and load from the roadside had been granted.

7. GTTG members updates

RSt summarised the current activities being undertaken by the Timber Transport Forum update (see attached).

RSi queried to whom consultation invitations for Felling Licence applications are sent within the LA (IC is also in discussions with FCS on the same matter). ICo advised that FCS are currently updating their consultation procedures and that a meeting is being arranged with the Environment, Roads and Archaeological Services of both Councils to discuss what is required. CG highlighted that there is a discrepancy between the minimum threshold for consultation in terms of timber transport (FCS advise 500 tonnes whereas the GTTG have always worked on the basis of 1000 tonnes). ICo suggested that this should be discussed and agreed at the FCS/LA meeting.

CG provided information on Confor's recently produced Guidance Note on Stakeholder engagement (see attached), the A9 Dualling project [October newsletter](#) and a presentation she gave on the Timber Transport Planning tool to the TACTRAN Freight Quality Partnership meeting on 13 November 2015.

8. Dates of Future meetings

WA asked members to note Thursday 17 March 2016 as the date of the next meeting but suggested that an earlier meeting may be called if further discussion is required on the Project Officer funding/role.

RSt highlighted that the [2016 Timber Transport Forum Conference](#) was being held on 10 March 2016 at Battleby, Perthshire.